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Prism

Spring 1991

The Literary Magazine of Peace College

1991 Prism

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Faculty Advisor: *Dr. Sally Buckner*

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The Prism staff would like to express its gratitude to Janet Harvey-Clark and Marty Baird for their patience, guidance, and inspiration.

Suburban Princess

My daughter has decided our front lawn
is a royal kingdom of days foregone.
The weeping willow - a noble castle,
Raggedy Ann, both servant and vassal.
Our old Brittney is her strapping stallion,
Teddy bears are soldiers of her battalion.

A yellow paper crown with bright green stones
adorns the head which occupies the throne.
Last summer's red beach towel with patched up tears,
her velvet cloak, which now she proudly wears.
Strings of clovers are thick chains of gold-
Necklaces and bracelets, a bit withered and old.

If a squirrel or stray cat wanders the yard,
the kingdom is warned by the royal guard.
Startled, she waves her twig sword in the air
And blows her toy trumpet with an awful blare.
War rages until enemy has fled
And the kingdom mourns the missing and dead.

Her noble highness commands the brigade
and makes certain royal taxes are paid.
She visits citizens, gathers support,
reviews invasions of enemy fort.
Hosts holiday feasts and throws regal balls
prepares minutemen to answer their calls.

Quite busy with royal obligations
she tries to supress all allegations
that even royal five-year-olds have mothers.
So every evening out go her brothers
to coax the princess to leave her state
and come to eat her supper, cooling on her plate.

Shannon Nickens

This Week's Food in Review

The spinach salad is out
Due to the direct link found
Between chlorophyll and Alaskan Jungle Fever.

Meat loaf would be a possibility
If Vogue hadn't exclusively revealed
Beef as the number one cause of infertility.

Today I learned that whole wheat bread
Leads to a loss of peripheral vision
And renders lab rats both insane and dead.

Kentucky Fried Chicken is under investigation
Charged with illegal breast enlargements
As a gruesome Rice Krispy rash invades the nation.

Just last night, NBC reported
A recall of kisses with faulty foil
(Old man Hershey has since been deported).

I'm glad I read before I chow
If the media wasn't concerned for my health,
I'd probably be dead by now.

Anna McKellar

Spiderkill

A spindly spider with angular legs
tiptoes across the floor.
I am repulsed by his splintering joints,
while I glare at his chiton orb.
Taking his presence personally,
I dislike the way I feel.
So I lurch forward for counterattack,
and grind him with my heel.

Drawing a tissue I scrape him up,
balling him with my hand.
Tosssing away his mangled corpse,
I begin to understand.
It is so easy to kill another,
if you find him displeasing.
Especially if he is not like you,
or doesn't know your reasoning.

Farrall Davis

Art and Things

Thoreau creates an immaculate world
Romeo ardently adores Juliet
Mozart commits melodious crime
A Nutcracker Prince enchants youthful Clara
Carabose maliciously impairs Sleeping Beauty
Giotto intensifies the birth of a Savior
Keats walks among dancing daffodils
And still,
We turn to television, fashion magazines, and rock music
For significance and solace.

Deanna Gibbs

Autumn Reverie

Chill whisper of the season fills the air.
Like subtle fire, red and orange tease
Each leaf, spreading here and there.

And like magic, flare defiantly the trees,
Decked gold and crimson stunning to the eyes,
And a hint of winter stings the breeze.

Every corner offers a new surprise.
On wooden paths, leaves flutter down,
And as she paints her colors, nature dies.

Majestic maples bear their golden crown,
And forests swirl colors dark and light;
But soon death claims magenta for brown.

Such a burning season of colors bright
Will soon give way to winter's black and white.

Lisa G. Mayo

Momentary Stays

so many places to go.
I-40, I-85, North, South
(West if lost)

Where have I been?
Wilmington, Raleigh, Charlotte
(Piedmont to Coast)

Where is home?
2520 Avent Ferry Rd. Raleigh; 6237 Fair Valley Dr. Charlotte
(Innocence to adulthood)

So many people to talk to.
Invisible faces behind drive through microphones,
Exxon attendants, a State Trooper
(Radar, 74 in a 65)

My musical companions.
Billy Joel, Elton John, Jimmy Buffet
(Greatest Hits)

My silent sanity and only friends
Clyde Edgerton, Pat Conroy, William Faulkner
(10% discount at Waldenbooks)

No time left to sit and observe.
Sunsets, the ocean, smog shielding the moon
(The ozone layer has holes)

No cash left anyway--
Lucky pennies, gas card, Master Charge
($500.00 limit)

For a brief summer interlude I lived a dream, thrown
back into chaos what happened to my momentary stay?

Julia Woodruff

Kalon's Song

Play, I beg,
Play the one you played last week--
The one you wrote when you were a child.
Yes, he says
And his blue sweatpants lumber over
To the tired old upright in the corner.
Curling up, I anticipate
The delicate waltz of the keys,
The powerful movement of his hands,
The stillness of his form.
Stripes of sunlight invade the den
As his oversized feet pedal perfect time
With the dance of his wrist.
Blonde curls droop lazily over his expressionless face
Oblivious to my emotion
Absorbed in a mechanical melody.

Strangely, I am jealous
Of this autistic artist
And I wonder
If the song in his head
Is as magical
As the one
That floats on sunbeams
And lingers in my mind.

Anna McKellar

Separate Cubes

Reaching,
clear glass
to quench
my thirst.
Selecting,
crystallized chips
of water.
Falling,
one, two
into a glass.
Glancing,
you, me
respected dimensions
and
forms of one another.
Satisfying,
my thirst.
Water,
You.

Dawn Peterson

Treacherous Hunger

She lives in a world of silent perfection
Where guilt is her driving force.
She never stops striving for love and affection,
And she's on a deadly course.

She holds her breath as she stares at her image
Reflected by mirrors of lies.
She never fails to find imperfection.
She bows her head, and she cries.

Just one more day of this treacherous hunger
And then she will be in control.
But each new day brings with it tomorrow,
And time is taking its toll.

So she'll pray tonight for some peace of mind
And strength to admit that she's wrong.
She'll remember a time of happy days
When her body was healthy and strong.

Elizabeth Raiford

Devil Drool

I saw the ink spill.
I saw the bottle fall to its side.
Blackness bubbled,
curiously spreading outward
into a puddle
at consistent speed,
lurking towards the table edge,

hesitation-

then drooling from the corner
oozing to the floor,
ebony falls.

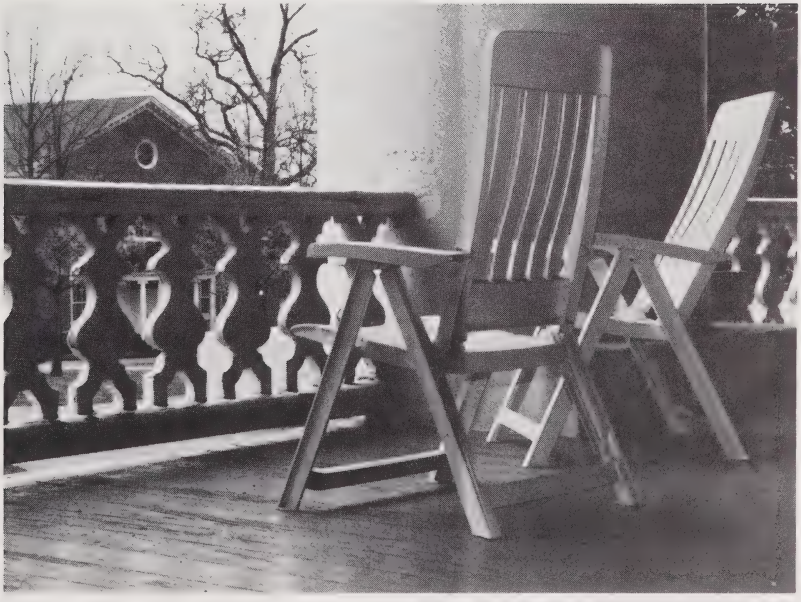
Farrall Davis

On Sundays

wake up late and miss
breakfast, but
you can eat dinner
right after church
corn on the cob
blackeyed peas
home-made biscuits
with real butter
leave the dishes
in the sink
read the funnies
and watch basketball
go to the park and play
frisbee with your dog
sip warmed over coffee
while leafing through
a magazine

just putter
until the 11 o'clock
news wraps up
the day

Shannon Nickens



Anna McKellar

Around Every Corner, Far From the Edge

Winding roads leading endlessly
between bare, winter plagued trees
along a clean, carved river
of melting snow,
sliding under low water bridges
smooth, white rock hanging over the edges . . .

Around a blind corner, a sign
with welts of white paint, pointed
down a crusty, brown, one-lane road,
cluttered with abandoned trailers,
a rusty school bus, and assorted tractor parts.

At the bottom of the hill,
a two story building, with a sign hanging
off a broken gutter: "SALE"
On the rickety porch, an antique rocking chair,
an oak pew, an ancient refrigerator.
To the left, a fenced-in turkey; on the steps
a yapping brown puppy.

Inside, by the cash register a display
of ground spices makes my eyes water,
and my mouth dance.
Liberty overalls hang over an RC cola case,
chain saw oil cans line the front counter,
and heated air from a stove cuts through
the hiss of Smoky Mountains Greatest Hits.

Smoke from a grilling cheeseburger
rose like a tornado funnel,
freshly baked pies in warm tin pans,
and sweaty plastic bags formed neat rows.

I order a cheeseburger
(all the way)
From the man in the blue plaid shirt
and look to the littered oak shelves
for a moonpie.

Longneck Coke in hand I relax
in front of the coal stove,
my lunch delivered, I rise to pay

He shakes his head:
(That ain't necessary 'less you're leavin' now.)

Then the clerk/head cook/owner/man in the plaid shirt
goes outside to put in a chew;
I'm alone with an old cash register
and his every posession.

Walking back to my car, I turn,
take one more look, and smile
as chills bite the back of my neck,
I realize there are still real people,
and real places, far,
far, from any edge.

Julia Woodruff

Ode to a Summer Rain

Dark fury casts a shadow on the sky
And tension fills the air in ripe suspense.
Heat rises steaming like a sigh.

The clouds hang, ominous and grayly dense,
Gingerly release a stinging drop to the ground,
Which hisses, uncomfortably tense.

Rising, penetrates the pressing hush a sound;
Anticipation like a roar of what will come.
Softly at first, then the rain begins to pound.

Rage booms a rhythm like a drum,
Cools the air, relieves the summer heat,
Fills the ears with a steady, musical hum.

A soothing melody plays a sleepy beat
Before slowing when the rainstorm is complete.

Lisa G. Mayo

War Games with Barry

Each fully uniformed in mother-issued layers of clothing,
We proudly forged out the door--onto the battlefield.
Along the house, behind the snow-capped shrubs,
In camps fortified with firmly-packed snowballs,
Our bitter war raged through the afternoon.

Splattered ruins of our bombarded forts--
Brownish ice, muddy slush--
Marked where our relentless armies had trudged.

Now safe from the enemy--we commanders sit quietly before the hearth,
At ease by the hissing, crackling fire--
Soothed by smooth and creamy hot chocolate.

Amy Cobb

View from Holden's Beach Fishing Pier

Her water breaks.
Life-giving liquid slides down splintered legs.
Tears from a clouded blue-grey eye
Splash into a puddle on the shore.

Scattered over the sand, jagged remnants--
The egg-shells of her children.
Enraged by her loss, she spits into the sky.

Amy Cobb

Death Steals

Death clambers in and clambers out.
Death's sadness steals our vivid dreams.
We are broken on a lonely route.
We are left hopeless searching for means.

We cannot find a way of grieving.
Time keeps flipping like a wheel.
We can never understand the leaving.
Time then forgets a heart of steel.

Julia Woodruff

UNRESTORATION

Gentle rain danced
On the cool tin roof,
Singing the children
To sleep.

Split-wood siding pulled
Away from the frame,
Lending owls a safe
Home for their young.

Dust glowed, drifting
Undisturbed, in the soft light
Which glided
Through the cracks.

Chirping sparrows rested
In the broken chimney,
Composing songs
At sunrise.

Then someone saw its potential.

Beige stucco replaced
The aged boards,
Discouraging unwelcomed
Creatures.

Instead of sheets of tin,
Forest green shingles
Prevented the clatter
Of raindrops.

The natural glow
Of the home extinguished,
By the sharpness
Of fluorescent lights.

Sparrow songs
Were drowned
By the constant hum
Of television and radio.

And the old home tripled its value
But lost all its worth.

Acacia Croyle

Paige Helms

The Daily Duel

Waiting, waiting, waiting for me,
in all its class, its burgundy.
Low to the ground, low on fuel.
I position myself for the daily duel:
Stationed within, staring without
ignoring this gnawing feeling of doubt.
The chrome is shining, the dash is clean:
the look of an awesome mean-machine.
Plopped down in pleather, I open the roof,
pump up the music, remain aloof.
Insert the key, pull on the choke,
watch the rear-view for signs of smoke.
Praying, praying for this classy old Benz,
waiting, waiting for sound to begin.
Repeat the procedure, hearing the whir,
then the rattle and hum as the engine stirs

Then it stops.

Again I tug; Old Benz starts to shake,
as if its bones are brittle and ache. Finally,
the engine rattles
Triumph ends our morning battle.

Beth Formy-Duval

Response

Propelled by my own force
into an obvious white smear,
where nothing is hidden,
nothing temporarily tucked away
Guarded by the arrogance of tradition,
applauded by some,
simply accepted by others-

I still will complain.
I have the right.
I will appeal,
for fiery lava will eventually cool,
forming into something
solid and approachable
as a suggestion.

Farrall Davis

Pier One

Spindly, prickly arthritic legs,
like a centipede
immersed knee-deep in barnacles, tangled by fishing line,
braced against
the push of tides.
Its stubbly knees knock now
swayed by smacks of salty spray.
Struggling to hold
the men along its spine,
its vertabrae moan
with their every step.

A monument
neither made of slabs
of grey marble
nor sculpted by human
hands.
Shaped instead by a master
of design; molded
into a creature
as alive as the sea.

Beth Formy-Duval

Retribution

The sky dons a violet shroud
And snarls like a wounded beast.
The miserable wail of the sea
Mourns its dead
As Poseidon roars with rage and pounds
The reef with pellets of fury
And disappointment.
Crushing waves tumble and reel,
Stagering toward the shore.
Slinging grit with his scream,
He delights in the splash
Of salt at his fingertips
And the waves at his command.
Stately castles crumble under the attack
And surrender to his wrath,
But they do not appease him.
The magnificient body writhes and contorts
In pain
And at once coughs and spits--

Rejecting our humble offerings
Of glass and plastic.

Anna McKellar

A Storm in the Desert

Such times are these that try our souls,
That wrench our aching hearts.
Each night we send up prayers for strength
Else we should fall apart.

We hear of rain in the desert sand
Where lines are being drawn.
We cover our ears with trembling hands
As the drums of war beat on.

Our hopes are tied in yellow ribbons
For those we've never known.
Oh, anything to give them strength,
To let them know they're not alone.

Confusion grows with every day.
So much is there to ask,
For how can we trust what they say
When it's filtered through a mask?

Oh, yes, it's hard, and at times we wish
It would all just disappear,
But some things are worth fighting for.
Some things are still held dear.

The selfless quest for freedom,
Not just here, but throughout the world,
Is something we have fought for
Since our flag has been unfurled.

Some say it's a question of morals;
Some say it's a matter of greed,
But either way, we're in this war.
Let's wish our troops God's speed.

Elizabeth Raiford

Love's Web

In love's web
entangled.
In its uncertain pathways
confused.
Slowly as its prey
devoured.

Leslie Smith

Radical Revolution in Visual Arts

Scenario
Pulsating with red rays
Muted earth tones
Minimal perspective

Abstraction
Figurative subject matter
On the verge of cubism
With intense clarity

Obscurity
Precisely chosen
Feel the choreography
Of line and space

Confusion
Supernatural in its radiance
Violent depression
Formal aspects of futurism

Antithesis
Of a goddess
Torn from the Cosmos
And applied
To the canvas

Anna McKellar

Paige Helms

Reverence

Through my Ray-Bans
I view the blue-violet stained glass ceiling
of my sea-side temple.
I worship from a striped, reclining
plastic pew.
I pray at the sand-dripped altar;
kneeling and offering sacrifices
from the sea: sand dollars
and dune oats.
I praise in song with a choir
of tone-deaf gulls,
dressed in white robes with gray sleeves,
accompanied by the pipe-legs of the pier,
humming low and whistling with the wind.
My attire,
two strips of cloth with no midriff,
reveal all shame of hot-flushed skin
to God.
His wordless sermon alive
through my UV shades.

Beth Formy-Duval

The Truth

No, I don't need help;
Just another drink.
No I don't need to talk;
Just a beer.
No, I don't need a taxi;
Just give me my keys.

No, he doesn't need a doctor;
Just call the coroner.

Acacia Croyle

Abstractions

i like to draw
abstractions
because
they have no particular form
or shape
like a bed
or a couch
or a table
ordinary table with four legs
i need to shave my legs i think my razor is dull
dull
like my boyfriend
i think we need to call it quits
i quit my job
the other day
just walked right out the door i hated that job
i hate
absent-minded people
they are too abstract and talk in circles
as i was saying i like to draw abstractions

Deanna Gibbs

Testimonial

I'm the kind who's always running trying to fly.
who's always speaking trying to improve.
who's always laughing to hide my tears.
the kind who's always wanting to stay the same, but can't help changing.
the kind who's always hiding because deep inside I'm afraid of you all.
I'm the kind who's always wanting to know what else there could be.
who's showing hate and love in the same breath.
I'm the kind who will always just be, just be, just be.
I'm just hoping that one of these days when I'm walking a great wind will come from behind and my arms will become wings.
But, like I said,
I'm the kind who is always running tripping before I ever start to fly.

Julia Woodruff

A Father's Watch

The castle fit for his lady
built by the five-year-old prince and his soldiers
stealing soft, tingly sand from enemy fort
underneath an aluminum, yellow lounge chair.
Small feet kicking flecks of gold
racing a clock that controls the light.

The battle has been won.
The castle stands in grandeur.
The prince and his troops are marched by his lady,
red buckets and white shovels in hand,
back to their knightly confinements.

Carefully honoring their hard work
The Father's duty is to protect their castle,
guarding the determination of their young, strong wills
in holding the ocean back.

Dawn Peterson

Fourteen

Third period PE class was almost over.
Some were frolicking on the playground's black top
And tossing the smooth white volleyball,
Others sat cross-legged like me
In grass that stretched to touch the Carolina sky.
Ten more eternal minutes....
Slowly Coach Liles approached our group.
Eyes embraced the hard cold ground.
With one motion, he wiped the sweat form his forehead
With his faded, red N.C. State baseball cap.
"He's dead," I thought. "He didn't make it."
Coach sure had some really big feet.
Rumor had it that he wore a size fourteen.
Michael was fourteen.

Teresita Cooper

Only Now Do I Remember

Old man in a dark green jump suit,
slouched in a tan woven rocking chair.
A "soda pop" and Little Debbie
oatmeal cream pies.

Stickled, short, white hair,
and dry, pleated lips.
A light blue Volkswagon bug,
checkers on a musty rug.

Slow, even walk, a stout belly,
and a heart that suddenly stopped.
A cold West Virginia blue sky,
back in Charlotte, me, an Indian
in the school's Thanksgiving Day play.

Blue suit, glasses, and makeup intact,
folded hands, and a deep hole
for you to rest.
A missed play, a rainy funeral day,
and a little girl who never knew
than grandaddies went away.

Julia Woodruff

He Does

Does God watch each leaf that falls,
Each color of the sky?
Does He notice every baby bird,
And when it begins to fly?
Does He see each burning sunset
As the colors flame and fade?
Is God always there to watch us
And the beauty that He made?
If for any instant you may doubt,
Just take a look above
At fiery trees against neverending sky--
All nature show God's love.
And if God watches every Robin
And God loves every flaming tree,
How much more must He love us,
And guide our destiny.

Lisa G. Mayo

Recreation of the Womb

Submerged beneath the bathline,
breath contained,
I just want to know,
to remember what it was like,
It's not just the soothing warmth,
It's that sound--
that sound of slow movement
blood ebbing,
echoing currents,
surging liquid,
beautifully slow.

Then change--

Lukewarm depths are like toxins.
I am a freak,
an obtrusive solid mass
of elbows, knees, and shoulders.
I struggle with position,
unable to hide
this gawky adult body.

I just can't do it anymore.

Writing upward,
torn away,
I am cold once again.

Farrall Davis

Old Woman and Child

She stands
Bulging brown purse
Cradled
In the crook of her arm

She leans
Bones brittle and stiffened
strokes my cheek
The scent of Jergen's
On her fingertips

She hums
Softly
"Swing Low, swing low,"
Vibrates on her lips

She moves
Thick soled shoes
Creaking
Like the passage of time.

Susan Finley

Revising Agendas

Big Dreams. . .
BMW sedan, 3 story brick house, two kids
Pin-striped business suit, honorary degrees,
sales rep. of the year.
Travel to Africa, ski the Alps, walk where Jesus did
Parties at the club, membership in the Junior league,
(All in 76.2 years)

And yet. . .
Hussein, nuclear arms, political uncertainty
Abortion, high crimes, suicide
(No guarantees of 76.2 years or even tomorrow)

Settle for. . .
Solitude, discovery, simplicity
Lie in the sun a second hour, swim naked in the surf,
indulge in another kiss.
Let the phone ring, skip a week of work, neglect your
vitamin dependency.
Forget the Stock Market, refuse the vice presidency,
give up your office in the metropolis.
(Just Follow Your Bliss)

Julia Woodruff

Addictive Conversation

Uniformly in a pack of 20.
Smacked right side up and upside down,
pressed and contained into an orderly space.

Tapped, one is released from the pack,
a single idea,
ready to be snatched.

Ignited by another with a flame of interest.
Ring by ring, discussed and debated.
Flicking away the trite and senseless.

Snuffed out, never to be touched again.
But always ready to light another.

Dawn Peterson

Grandma's Afternoon Coca-Cola Break

Beneath the sturdy old oak, lulled by the swing's methodic rocking,
I drift back fifty years--
To ragged cloth dolls--the gem-crowned princesses from English manors, my playmates;
To endless afternoons coiled in a tire, rolling through the dust, away from my chores;
To brisk mornings walking to school, red mittened fingers warmed by my first boyfriend, Bobby.

Beneath the dusky sky, warmed by the sun's slanted rays,
I am jolted into the present--
Where well-dressed Barbie dolls become glamorous movie-stars under the direction of my granddaughter;
Where her giddy laughter tinkles as she dances under the sprinkler's chilly mist;
Where a tow-headed little boy dashing after her spontaneously pecks her glistening cheek.

Drops of water from the sprinkler--or maybe tears--
Trace slowly the boundary of my smile.
How quickly the sun has set!

Amy Cobb

Persistent Pine Door

I could not open that door.
Weather-chapped pine wouldn't budge.
I lifted up and down, twisting the tarnished brass knob.
I pulled to and pushed in, bruising my knuckles.
I kicked and kicked, bloodying my toe.
I could not open that door.
Weary from the struggle, I got the key from under the mat, and unlocked it.

Julia Woodruff

Tribute to Bach

The overture begins.
No audience.
Just me,
As I close my eyes to melodious rhymes in F major.
London Symphony apreggios
Send complete cadence throughout the room.
Harmonization, orchestration release frustration
His own apotheosis
The finale begins,
As waltzes cease to silent sleep.
Bach – my midnight serenader.

Deanna Gibbs

Banner Waving

Stretch and swirl, unfurl my arm
High to the sky, I reach for the sun.
Wind whipping stripes, snap as if starched
Bombs fall whistling, sound the alarm.

Stars emblazened on my corner of blue
Emblem for all united, divided – undecided
Individual right to fight or refuse
Rally 'round boys – if you choose.

Symbol of God, Mom, apple pie
Adored, revered, endeared, ignored
Occasional flame lick my thick cloth
Under my curled arm men live – and die.

Susan Finley

Carriage Ride With Death

The mere mention of death is a sensitive subject for most; however, others find solace in its contemplation. One such person who found solace in death is Emily Dickinson. Death is portrayed as a seemingly simple carriage ride in her poem, "Because I could not stop for death." In her poem "Death" also takes on the form of a gentleman caller. Through word choice, imagery, and variation in tone, Emily Dickinson conveys to the reader that life is a continuous journey, or carriage ride, to death that is not to be feared, but rather to be accepted.

Emily Dickinson carefully chooses her words in order to support her point that life is a one-way ride with death. One of Dickinson's first choices is the pronoun "He." Normally one would replace the word death with the pronoun "it", instead Dickinson replaces "Death" with "He." By doing so Dickinson personifies death and creates a mortal, gentleman suitor named "Death." Death is usually referred to as uncaring and unkind. In opposition to most views about death, Dickinson presents Death as a civil and courteous with her use of the word "Civility." Death is welcomed and accepted by the passenger, who does not seem to realize that her ride is to her death. The passenger puts away her labors and leisure to prepare for her carriage ride. Instead of Death's snatching her away immediately, "He" patiently waits for the passenger, therefore showing his civility. Because Death is civil, the passenger accepts Death's offer as if it is a courtship.

Dickinson creates vivid images throughout her poem to support her theme that death should just be accepted. The carriage ride becomes the central image of the poem. Death calls on the passenger to take a carriage ride as a suitor might do. The passenger shows no fear, believing that the carriage ride would be pleasurable. As the ride progresses, the images of childhood, maturity, and death are shown to the passenger in the third stanza:

> We passed the school, where Children strove
> At Recess - in the Ring -
> We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain -
> We passed the Setting Sun -

The third stanza presents the past life of the passenger: the innocence of childhood even though a child must strive at recess, the fields of grain which symbolize growth and maturity, the final setting of the sun on her life. D'ckinson draws a new picture as the passenger sees her final destination - the grave. Wearing her gown, symbolizing her future angelic clothing, the passenger stops

"before a House that seemed/ A swelling of the Ground -." The "House" that the carriage pauses at is the grave that will be her new home. A grave is not the image that is normally associated with a home.

Finally, Dickinson's use of a varied tone helps to support the acceptance of death. In stanza 1 - 3, the passenger is excited about her journey. Dickinson uses the words "kindly," "He knew no haste," and "Civility" to portray a light and pleasurable tone. The passenger is happy to reminisce about her youth and to be escourted by a gentlemanly suitor. In the fourth stanza, the tone changes from the excitement of the ride to the emotionless face-to-face confrontation with the darkness of Death. The passenger feels the "quivering and chill" as her soul ascends into Heaven. It had been centuries since her ride had begun, but time is irrelevant in eternity. By saying "and yet/ Feels shorter than the Day," the passenger further reveals that she is glad she took the ride.

Emily Dickinson's combination of word choice, imagery, and tone shows that life is a drawn-out carriage ride with Death that begins at birth. Dickinson also exhibits that one should not dwell on dying, because eventually it will happen to everyone. It is ironic that Dickinson would use a carriage ride to illustrate her view on death. In her poem, "Death" comes to take her for a ride in a carriage. In the mid-1800's, Death came to take the deceased on a ride-- the funeral procession. The carriages were drawn by horses and the slow processsion passed by the schoolhouse, the fields, the setting sun, to the graveyard, just as in the poem. A body would be wrapped in a gossamer "gown" before being placed in the casket. The poem ends with the appropriate word "Eternity". Eternity is the final destination of the rider in the carriage, and upon reaching eternity, one is shown why death shoud not be feared--there is a new life awaiting.

Leslie Smith

Jackie Hinkel

The Sea of Life

Children,
Along the waters edge
Constructing memories
And sandcastles.

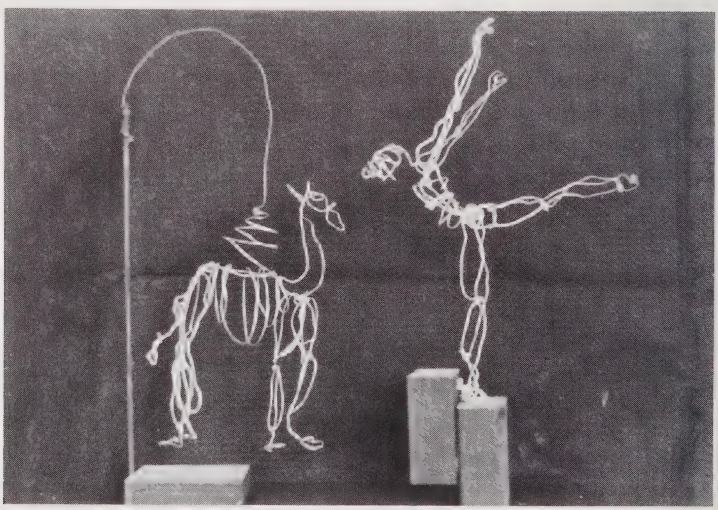
Teenaged girls,
Waist-deep in their lives,
Caught between the fear
And the playfulness of the moment.

Young men,
Crouched on their surfboards,
Awaiting life's adventures
Which come thundering toward the shore.

Women,
Lying on the warm sand,
Basking in the rays of others,
Not wanting to experience life itself.

Grey-haired couples,
Strolling at dusk,
After the others disperse,
Only wanting to enjoy the simplicity.

Acacia Croyle



Farrall Davis

Dirty Joke

I look at you with smoldering, green eyes,
excruciatingly picking you apart
inside and out.

A sly, wicked smile adorns my face.
My laugh appears naive.

I understand more than you know.

Dawn Peterson

Attention

Yes, Sir!
I will, Sir.
I will go
I will not stop
I will fire
when I see
the whites
of their eyes.
I will obey.
I will go out
in the desert sand
and crawl
and run
and aim
I'll terror-
ize.
Yes, Sir
I will
SIR...

Sir, I'm scared, sir.

Beth Formy-Duval

Stages

My beautiful butterfly
has metamorphosized
and soon it will be
time to fly
away . . .
Bethany Leigh Tracy

Detachment

A lump will emerge in your breast,
a malignant mass which must be removed,
along with half your chest.

When you tell your family,
you will sit to the left of your husband,
as your children stare at you with fear.
That night, when the lights are out,
your family of five seperate,
into their own private grief.

When chemotherapy pulls out your hair,
and you feel nauseous and weak,
your husband will still say you're beautiful,
and your children will still laugh at jokes.

Then life eases up,
you become almost comfortable in your wig,
you almost forget,
the lies of remission.

Because while your life almost seems fair again,
yes, and maybe there is a God,
in the minds of your children,
Cancer will have spread to your bones,
you will sit to the left of your husband,
telling the pinched faces of your children,
you have six months to live.
Grief becomes no longer private.

Before you die,
you will mumble the names of your children,
and then slip away from your sobbing surroundings.

Farrell Davis

Andra Savage

Awakening

They are roused, these girls in a blustery cloud,
from their splendorous beauty sleep.
In scarlet petals of roses, rise
Social calls: a must to keep.

They awake with a rush, they flounder around
dressing in ruffles and lace.
They look in the mirror, zip on name-brands
and attach their designer face.

With silly grins, they set about,
worrying about faux pas,
procrastinating passions for another day,
or forgetting what they are.

In unison they dress and dance
with vivacious thoughts converse
Important matters put behind
For thinking is a curse.

They will spend a day of flitting about
then retire to their beds.
Unperturbrd in their scarlet abode
they rest their empty heads.

Beth Formy-Duval

Goldfish

Gliding through the glistening water,
his flapping gills grab for oxygen.
He swims in circles,
ignoring the stream of bubbles
chasing one another to the surface.
He maneuvers around
plastic plants, purple shadows on his scales.
Once a day I scatter his food,
and he scurries to the surface to dine.
Then, when he has consumed all he can,
he meanders to the side
and sends me kisses through the glass.

Shannon Nickens

THEATRE

I watch as the conductor
lifts his hands
and the women move across the stage.
The lights dim, then brighten,
and the symphony begins.

For over four weeks,
I watched the music,
the tempo, the orchestrated
rhythm. I witnessed
tongue-tattering lyrics,
stuttering skips,
flubs and flaws.
I watched the women tune
their voices,
and their dance.
As the days progressed,
the rhythm moved, and the stops
stopped and the power grew
and the tempo surged:
into crescendo after decrescendo,
skipping no beats,
reaching each note,
until the piece
was whole and mighty.

I watch as the spot
dims, the conductor
moves forward,
the women bow,
and house lights come full.
For me the music never ends.

Beth Formy-Duval

Branded

Thrust into one of the city's shadowed capillaries,
Blood pounded through my brain and onto the pavement.
Fingernails driven into sweat-slimy flesh
Futile, as he pierced my innocence,
Leaving my conscience and my body branded.

Startled awake by shameful visions of searing blue eyes,
I drown in icy sweat and guilt-laden tears.

Amy Cobb

Brainstorm

Ideas vaporize
Heavily, hanging in anticipation
Of the lazy plop of words on parchment
Uncertainty prevails
In the ever-steadying sprinkle
And splash of rhetorical rain
Phrases condense
Then curl and twist
Into sequence-seeking whirlwinds
Rhythm reigns
Over the echo of troublesome thunder
And the crackle of electric effort
Preceding the climactic
White flash of discovery.

Anna McKellar

Postal Pressure

I got up as early as I could Monday morning and headed for Belk cafeteria to get my mail. As I first caught a glimpse of the metal post office boxes, my heart began racing as I thought "Am I actually going to get a letter today?"

I reached my mailbox and without looking through the little glass window in the front of it, I put my memorized combination into action and opened the small case in an anxious rush. I bent myself over to the height of the mailbox and looked inside with the expectation of getting a letter from my mom and dad, my boyfriend, or a friend but instead I found "NOTHING!"

I felt flushed, this was it, my life was over! No one loves me anymore! I walked solemnly back to my room where I found my roommate sitting on her bed gleefully opening the first of a small but significant stack of letters from friends and relatives.

"Don't people understand how important mail is to an average college student?" I thought at least Thalhimers or J. C. Penney's would send me a catalog seeing that I signed up for every catalog in every store of every mall in Raleigh. They just don't seem to realize that just one letter is like gold to a miner, a driver's license to a sixteen-year-old, or getting a perfect score on Mr. Ritchie's final exam. But yet, patience is a virtue and I wait until the next day to try again.

First thing in the morning, I walk with a quick pace to Belk Lounge only to stare at that empty and very hollow metal box again. But it occurs to me: there is only one explanation to where all of my mail is going. The mailman must be holding it for a ransom of some kind, but then again I haven't received a threat letter from him, either.

Peace College hasn't even sent me a flier. In fact, the other day I almost skipped chapel just so I could get a chapel cut notice but I decided the prayer might do me some good. "Does anyone even know I'm alive?" I decided to give it one more try.

I arose from my bed in a depressed mood anticipating the same old "better luck next time" letter-getting routine. I walked through Main Parlor dragging my feet and eyeing the flowers and packages with other people's names on them. I walked slowly into Belk Lounge and over to the mailboxes, turned the knob and opened the small door.

And to my surprise, there, in the back of my mailbox was a thick, white envelope with the words "Southern Bell" on the return address. I jumped for joy. "Someone knows I'm alive!" I screamed with excitement.

I know what you're thinking, "doesn't she realize that a phone bill is not something to look forward to getting?" But you have to understand, to a college freshman who is just getting used to being "on her own," mail is everything.

Molly Briggs

Michelle

Upon diving
into the
depth of earth
explore all
Implore only
the divinities.
Our friendship--
precious,
priceless.
eternal.
Eternal.

Bethany Leigh Tracy

From the Stove

Dyed black hair frantically disarrayed
flushed cheeks highlight
exhausted eyes
intent on cooking
fried chicken, mashed potatoes.

Identical black hair, coarse and uncombed
Daughter glares across the table.
Her girlhood past
(the Homecoming Queen attended her twentieth class reunion).

The elder mothered with suffocating love
excusing her baby's harshness and hangovers
caring for family her only current event.

And now:
It's three grandchildren to raise,
Three meals a day
and nothing changes.

Dawn Peterson

Portrait of a Soldier

The battlefield is hot and dry.
You fall, your body badly bruised.
The enemy is incessant.
You are brave.
Firing rounds of ammunition at an unseen enemy.

Motion the men to follow, you think.
The sun beats down on your bloodied face, blinding your eyes.
Men scream in terror and pain.
One falls.
You stop and crawl to the soldier, dragging him to safety.

You hear nothing, but you clutch your gut and fall.
Breathing is labored.
Pain surrounds you and blackness comes.
You pray for your country and die.

Heather Hocamp

Adjustments

Setting
the table the dishes are like numbers on a clock.
Smiling
I trace my son's dimples as we embrace.
Walking
I feel the corner of the wall.
Watching
I hear the sitcom on T.V.

Dreaming
the sun sprinkles through my curtains.
Awakening
to the warmth of the sun,

I open my eyes to blackness.

Dawn Peterson